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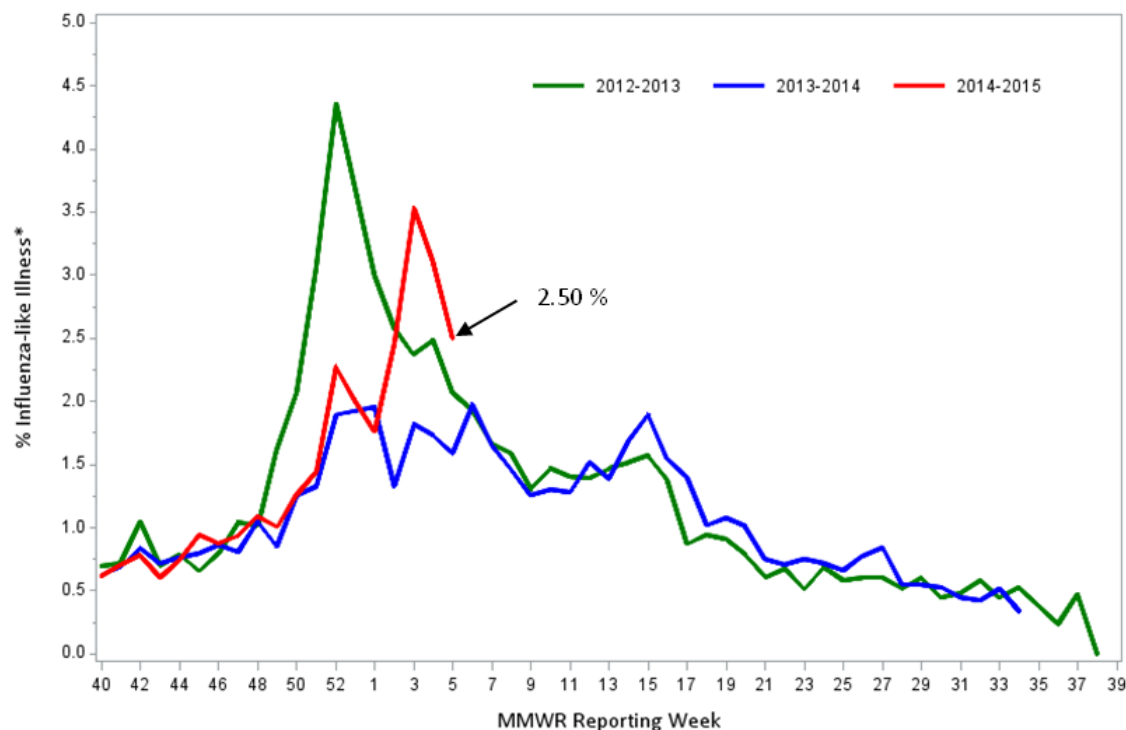
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## It's Not Too Late to Get Vaccinated Against the Flu

**February 13, 2015** - Recent surveillance reports from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health indicate that influenza, or “flu” activity is still present in Massachusetts. Reports of flu activity in Massachusetts are more prevalent now than in November and December. Traditionally, cases of the flu continue to occur in February to early March in Massachusetts. **If you haven't received an annual flu vaccination, now is the time to get one!** Below, you will find a graph of Influenza-like Illness (a commonly used indicator of flu) activity in Massachusetts as of 2/7/15 in comparison to the previous two flu seasons:

*Figure 1: Percentage of ILI visits reported by sentinel provider sites*



\*Influenza-like illness (ILI, defined by fever >100F and cough and/or sore throat), as reported by Massachusetts sentinel surveillance sites

If you have not been vaccinated, the Lexington Health Division recommends that you contact your physician or local pharmacy. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends

that everyone six (6) months and older receive an annual flu vaccine. Over 200,000 people are hospitalized in the US each year due to complications from the flu, so don't become a statistic!

<b>Total Vaccinated 9/1/14 – 1/7/15</b>
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Older adults, young children, pregnant women, and those people with underlying health problems including obesity are especially vulnerable to serious medical complications if they come down with the flu. It's also important to get a flu vaccine if you live with or care for, anyone who is especially vulnerable to complications from the flu, or with infants younger than 6 months, since they are too young to get the vaccine.

The Lexington Health Division partnered with Lexington Public School Nurses, Medical Reserve Corp, Human Services Department, Police Department, Fire Department and various town administrators to conduct eight community influenza vaccination clinics in Lexington. A total of 2,728 citizens were vaccinated at these clinics. Here's a breakdown by age.

Age Group	Number Vaccinated
0-3	32
4-5	91
6-12	583
13-18	428
19-29	63
30-39	170
40-49	488
50-59	342
60-69	254
70-79	162
80-89	104
90-99	11
<b>Totals</b>	<b>2728</b>

Limited doses of flu shots are available free of charge at the Lexington Health Division in the Town Administration Building, 1625 Massachusetts Ave while supplies last. **Please call (781) 698-4509 or email [dneylon@lexingtonma.gov](mailto:dneylon@lexingtonma.gov) to make an appointment with the Public Health Nurse.** Appointments are available most Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays during business hours.

In addition to getting an annual flu vaccination, the following tips can help protect you, your neighbors, friends, co-workers and family during the regular flu season.

**Wash your hands.** Frequent hand washing with soap, warm water and disposable paper towels is best. Alcohol based hand sanitizer is also an effective means to clean your hands.

**Cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze.** Cough or sneeze into a tissue or the inside of your elbow. Throw tissues away and wash your hands. Staying home when sick also helps to keep the illness from spreading.

**Don't touch your eyes, nose or mouth.** This decreases the chance that you will get the flu virus or other germs into your body, or that you will pass the flu to others.

**Clean surfaces that are touched often.** Clean things that are touched often, such as door or refrigerator handles, computer keyboards and mice, phones and water faucets.

**Avoid contact with people who are sick.** Avoid unnecessary contact like holding, kissing or sharing food, dishes and cups with anyone who has a cold or the flu. People with young children, weak immune system or a chronic illness should avoid large crowds, if possible.

For more information or to receive a free copy of "*Caring for People at Home, Flu – What you can Do.*" please contact the Office of Community Development, Health Division, Gerard Cody, Health Director at 781-698-4503. You may also visit, [www.flu.gov/](http://www.flu.gov/) or [www.mass.gov/flu](http://www.mass.gov/flu). This important message was brought to you by the Lexington Board of Health.